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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
TRSE-00 OMB-01 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00
ACDA-12 HA-05 OES-07 DOE-15 SOE-02 DOEE-00 EB-08
COME-00 ARA-10 AID-05 /138 W
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O R 061555Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7408
INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, US, SF
SUBJECT: BOTHA COMMENTS ON USG-SAG RELATIONS

1. SUMMARY: DURING THE JUNE 5 PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON FOREIGN POLICY, SOUTH AFRICAN MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS PIK BOTHA DELIVERED AN OVERVIEW OF SAG-USG RELATIONS. BOTHA'S PRESENTATION OF HOW THE SAG VIEWS USG POLICY WAS RELATIVELY MODERATE AND NON-POLEMICAL. (FULL TEST TO BE SENT TO DEPARTMENT BY AIRGRAM; REMARKS ON NAMIBIA REPORTED SEPTEL.) END SUMMARY.

2. BOTHA EXPLAINED US POLICY TOWARD SOUTH AFRICA IN PARTICULAR AND AFRICA IN GENERAL AS FLOWING FROM A MULTIPLICITY OF FACTORS, BOTH GLOBAL AND DOMESTIC. IN ADDITION, HE REITERATED THE USUAL THEMES ABOUT AMERICAN MISCONCEPTIONS OF THE SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA.

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3. BOTHA SAID THE US HAS CONCLUDED THAT "IT SHOULD EMPHASIZE ITS RELATIONS WITH THE WESTERN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND NOT SEEK TO COUNTER SOVIET INITIATIVES AND EXPANSIONS AT EVERY POINT THROUGHOUT THE WORLD." BOTHA QUOTED JOSEPH KRAFT TO SUPPORT HIS CONTENTION THAT THE US IS TAKING A LONG RANGE VIEW AND HE CONCEDED THAT OVER A PERIOD OF TIME THIS POLICY MIGHT WORK OUT AND RUSSIAN

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INFLUENCE IN AFRICA MIGHT EVENTUALLY BE REDUCED. HOWEVER, THE MODERATE AFRICAN LEADERS FORESEE YEARS OF SUFFERING AND SOVIET DOMINATION AND THE LONG TERM AMERICAN VIEW IS THUS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO THEM.

4. WITHOUT APPARENT DISPARAGEMENT, BOTHA STATED THAT THE US GOVERNMENT "HAS MADE HUMAN RIGHTS AN IMPORTANT IF NOT THE MAIN PILLAR OF ITS FOREIGN POLICY." ANOTHER FACTOR, HOWEVER, WAS THE ADMINISTRATION'S DESIRE "NOT TO FORFEIT THE SUPPORT OF THE BLACK VOTERS" IN AMERICA. BOTHA THEN REITERATED THE SOUTH AFRICAN VIEW THAT THE US MISTAKENLY EQUATES THE RACIAL PROBLEM IN THE US WITH THAT IN SOUTH AFRICA. BOTHA ALSO REVIEWED THE CRITICAL US REQUIREMENT FOR OIL AND THE USG'S PERCEIVED NEED TO MAINTAIN THE BEST POSSIBLE RELATIONS WITH NIGERIA. THE RESULT OF ALL THESE FACTORS, BOTHA SAID, WAS THAT THE US HAS CONCLUDED THAT GOOD RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AT THE EXPENSE OF ITS RELATIONS WITH AFRICA WERE NOT IN ITS INTEREST; THAT SOUTH AFRICA'S INTERNAL POLICIES ARE IRRECONCILIABLE WITH ITS OWN HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY AND CONCEPT OF THE DIGNITY OF MAN, AND THAT THERE ARE NOT STRONG ENOUGH REASONS TO SOFT-PEDAL THIS; THAT THE ONLY SATISFACTORY POLICY IN SOUTH AFRICA WHICH IT WILL ACCEPT AS THE BASIS OF GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE US IS A POLICY OF MAJORITY RULE IN ONE GEOGRAPHIC ENTITY, "AS EXPOUNDED BY VICE PRESIDENT
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MONDALE IN VIENNA." HE CONCLUDED THAT THE US VIEWPOINT IS THAT THE WHITES IN SOUTH AFRICA "IN DUE COURSE MUST ACCEPT A SUBORDINATE ROLE IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS, BUT THEIR PRESENCE WOULD BE TOLERATED TO KEEP THE ECONOMY GOING."

5. BOTHA NOTED THAT THERE WERE POSITIVE ELEMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA'S RELATIONS WITH THE US, AND THAT HE BELIEVED THERE WERE THOSE IN THE US ADMINISTRATION AND ELSEWHERE WHO WOULD LIKE TO SEE AN IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS. IN HIGH LEVEL CONTACTS, HE SAID, SOUTH AFRICA "HAD IDENTIFIED SOME OF THE AREAS WHICH MIGHT RECEIVE URGENT ATTENTION."

6. BOTHA ALSO PERCEIVED "A RAY OF HOPE" IN THE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION "WHICH APPEAR TO BE EMERGING IN THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION CONCERNING RUSSIAN AND CUBAN ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA." BOTHA, HOWEVER, SAID HE DID NOT KNOW HOW SUBSTANTIAL THESE DIFFERENCES WERE. HE WELCOMED THE LATEST STATEMENTS BY PRESIDENT CARTER REGARDING THE SERIOUS THREAT POSED BY THE SOVIET UNION NOT ONLY TO AFRICA BUT TO OTHER AREAS AS WELL.

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7. BOTHA WARNED OF INCREASING ANTI-SOUTH AFRICAN
SENTIMENT IN THE US, REFLECTED, AMONG OTHER THINGS,
IN A NUMBER OF LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS CURRENTLY BEFORE
THE US CONGRESS AND HE BRIEFLY DETAILED A NUMBER OF THESE.
THUS, HE CONCLUDED, THERE WAS NO INDICATION AS YET
THAT US PRESSURES ON SOUTH AFRICA, BOTH OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL,
WOULD DIMINISH IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. ON THE CONTRARY,
HE WARNED, HE COULD NOT RULE OUT A FURTHER DETERIORATION IN
RELATIONS.

8. EMBASSY COMMENT ON THE SAG'S CURRENT POSTURE TOWARD
THE US WILL BE REPORTED SEPTEL FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF THE
FOREIGN POLICY DEBATE.
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